

TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Bill No. 8053

Introduced by Hon. Antonio B. Legarda Jr.

**AN ACT
PROHIBITING THE DISPLAY OR ADVERTISEMENT OF GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS' NAMES AND PHOTOS IN ALL GOVERNMENT ISSUED
DOCUMENTS, PROGRAMS, PROJECTS, PUBLIC SERVICES, AND MOTOR
VEHICLES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Public service should never be about advertising a politician. Across the country, the names, faces and slogans of public officials are commonly displayed on government-funded items - from waiting sheds and infrastructure signages to relief packs and other forms of *ayuda*. Despite being paid for entirely with public funds, these displays create the impression that such projects and assistance are personal gifts or favors from individual officials.

This practice misleads citizens into believing that government aid depends on political personalities, rather than being a basic right guaranteed by the State. By blending political promotion with the delivery of government services, the line between public duty and self-promotion is effectively inexistent.

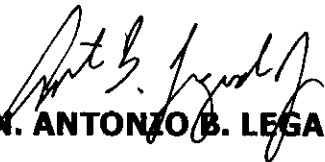
This bill, to be known as the "**Anti-Epal Act**", seeks to put an end to this practice by prohibiting the display or advertisement of the names, photos, logos, and other forms of personal branding of public officials on government-funded infrastructure projects, public service signages, vehicles, official documents, and assistance programs. The measure emphasizes that these projects and services are delivered by the State, funded by taxpayers, and should never be used to advance personal or political interests.

The proposed measure establishes clear standards on prohibited acts, mandates the removal of existing violations, and designates the Civil Service Commission as the primary implementing and enforcement authority, in coordination with other relevant

agencies. It also imposes penalties commensurate to the seriousness of the offense, particularly when violations occur in connection with the distribution of government assistance or during election-related periods.

By clearly separating public service from self-promotion, this bill aims to promote fairness, accountability, and integrity in government, while restoring public trust in how public resources are used and presented.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought. This bill also serves as the counterpart measure to that filed in the Senate by Senator Loren Legarda.


HON. ANTONIO B. LEGARDA, JR.

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17 **AN ACT**
18 **PROHIBITING THE DISPLAY OR ADVERTISEMENT OF GOVERNMENT**
19 **OFFICIALS' NAMES AND PHOTOS IN ALL GOVERNMENT ISSUED**
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23 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in*
24 *Congress assembled:*
25

26 Section 1. ***Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “Anti-Epal Act.”

27 Section 2. ***Declaration of Policy.*** – It is the policy of the State to uphold the
28 constitutional principles of honesty, integrity, and accountability in public service.
29 Government authority shall be exercised solely for the benefit of the people, free from
30 self-promotion, undue credit-grabbing, or political patronage. Further, it is the policy
31 of the State for all elected and appointed public officers and employees to serve with
32 utmost honesty and integrity and take proactive and effective measures against graft
33 and corruption.

34 Section 3. ***Definition of Terms.*** – For the purpose of this Act, the term:

35 (a) “Electoral Candidate” refers to any person, whether an incumbent public
36 officer or a private citizen, who has duly filed a Certificate of Candidacy before
37 the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) for the succeeding Sangguniang

1 Kabataan, barangay, local, national, or special elections, irrespective of whether
2 the official election or campaign period, as defined in Batas Pambansa Bilang
3 881, otherwise known as the Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines, has
4 commenced;

5 (b) "Government" refers to the national government, the local governments,
6 the government-owned and government-controlled corporations, and all other
7 instrumentalities or agencies and branches of the Republic of the Philippines;

8 (c) "Government Issued Documents" refers to official papers or digital records
9 that are formally created, authorized, or released by the government to serve
10 a specific legal, administrative, regulatory, or informational purpose, including
11 but not limited to permits, certifications, IDs, and clearances;

12 (d) "Government Program" refers to government-funded initiatives involving
13 the delivery of goods, services, financial assistance, or benefits to the public,
14 including social protection, education, livelihood, health, infrastructure support,
15 and similar programs, but excluding purely regulatory, inspection, or
16 enforcement activities performed in the regular course of official duties;

17 (e) "Government Project" refers to all current and future government
18 infrastructure, engineering works and services, and other related and necessary
19 activities such as site acquisition, supply and/or installation of equipment and
20 materials, implementation, construction, completion, operation, maintenance,
21 improvement, repair and rehabilitation;

22 (f) "Motor vehicles" includes, but is not limited to, all government-owned or
23 leased motor vehicles, police cars, ambulances, fire trucks, multi-cabs,
24 barangay vehicles; other motor vehicles being used for official function; and
25 any and all private vehicles being used for or in behalf of the government;

26 (g) "Personal Branding" refers to any name, initials, image, likeness, logo,
27 slogan, color scheme, or graphic identifier that directly or indirectly identifies
28 an elected or appointed public official and is not required by law, regulation, or
29 official protocol, when displayed on government-funded property, programs,
30 projects, documents, or activities.

(h) "Public officer" means elective and appointive officials and employees, permanent or temporary;

(i) "Public services" refers to government-funded outreach or service-delivery activities such as medical missions, job caravans, mobile services, and similar activities where benefits are directly provided to individuals or communities.

(j) "Public works" includes, but is not limited to the following: streets, bridges, sidewalks, public buildings, public parks, sewage facilities, basketball courts, waiting sheds, lampposts, and all public work projects which are funded, wholly or partly, through public funds released by the Government;

(k) "Signage" includes any form of written announcement, installed, posted, painted or otherwise displayed in a public place.

Section 4. ***Prohibited Acts.*** – The following constitutes a violation of this Act:

(a) Affixing, or causing to be affixed the name, initials, logo, image, or personal branding of any public official to a signage announcing a proposed, on-going or completed public works as defined under Section 3(j). For purposes of this Act, liability shall attach to any public officer who ordered, approved, authorized, knowingly allowed, or failed to prevent the prohibited display;

(b) Affixing or causing to be affixed the name, initials, logo, image, or personal branding of any public official to a signage crediting an individual officer, or bearing his or her image, on any and all kinds of public services and motor vehicles as defined under Section 3(i) and (f) respectively. For purposes of this Act, liability shall attach to any public officer who ordered, approved, authorized, knowingly allowed, or failed to prevent the prohibited display;

(c) Affixing or causing to be affixed the name, initials, logo, image, or personal branding of any public official to a signage – crediting an individual officer, or bearing his or her image, on any and all kinds of government-issued documents except where the inclusion of a name or signature is expressly required by law or regulation solely for purposes of authentication or legal validity;

1 (d) Naming or identifying government projects as defined under Section 3(e)
2 after any government officials or other persons whose identity may in any
3 manner be associated with said government officials, except those as may be
4 determined by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) in
5 accordance with law or its duly issued guidelines or regulations; and

6 (e) Interfering, whether through physical presence or by any other direct or
7 indirect means such as guarantee letters, endorsement letters, and other
8 similar mechanism, in the orderly conduct of government programs as defined
9 under Section 3(d), using such programs as a means to promote, endorse,
10 solicit support for, or otherwise advance any political interest, agenda, or
11 partisan objective. This prohibition against interference shall extend to an
12 electoral candidate as defined in Section 3(a).

13 Section 5. ***Allowed Practices.*** – Nothing in this Act shall be construed to prohibit
14 any agency, department, or local government unit from affixing, or causing to be
15 affixed, its official name or logo on signage announcing a proposed, ongoing, or
16 completed public works project, or from installing, or causing to be installed, signage
17 announcing the maintenance, rehabilitation, or construction of public works, crediting
18 the agency, department, or local government unit concerned. Such signage may bear
19 the official name or logo solely for purposes of identification and accountability in the
20 maintenance, rehabilitation, or construction of public works, subject to existing rules,
21 guidelines, and specifications laid down by the Commission on Audit (COA) on
22 information and publicity on programs/projects/activities of government agencies.

23 Campaign materials disseminated during the election and campaign period, as
24 defined under Article I, Section 3 of Batas Pambansa Bilang 881, otherwise known as
25 the Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines, shall likewise be deemed permissible,
26 subject to the limitation, rules, and regulations promulgated by the Commission on
27 Elections (COMELEC).

28 Section 6. ***Removal of Existing Signage.*** – The Department of Public Works and
29 Highways (DPWH), in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local
30 Government (DILG), and the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), is hereby

1 ordered to remove all existing signage announcing a proposed, on-going, or completed
2 public works project, within three (3) months after the effectivity of this Act.

3 Likewise, all concerned public officers shall be duty bound to remove existing
4 signages in any and all public service projects and motor vehicles within thirty (30)
5 days after effectivity of this Act. Cost of such removal, if any, shall be borne by the
6 public officer.

7 **Section 7. *Anti-Epal Desk.*** – The Civil Service Commission (CSC) shall be the primary
8 implementing and administrative enforcement authority of this Act. Through its
9 Regional and Field Offices, the CSC shall establish and maintain an Anti-Epal
10 Enforcement and Complaints Mechanism covering all public officers and employees,
11 whether national or local, appointive or elective, subject to the Constitution and
12 existing laws.

13 The CSC shall ensure that the enforcement of this Act is carried out in a manner
14 consistent with civil service laws, due process, and existing disciplinary rules.

15 **Section 8. *Anti-Epal Desks and Filing of Complaints.*** – The CSC shall designate
16 Anti-Epal Desks in its Regional and Field Offices, which shall serve as the central
17 intake, documentation, and primary evaluation units for complaints involving violations
18 of this Act. The Anti-Epal Desks shall be administrative and non-adjudicatory in nature.

19 Any person may file a complaint for any violation of this Act. Anonymous
20 complaints shall be admissible where the complainant reasonably fears retaliation or
21 reprisal, provided that the complaint is supported by sufficient documentary,
22 photographic, or other physical evidence.

23 The form and manner of filing complaints shall be prescribed in the
24 Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act and shall, at a minimum, require the
25 identification of the public officer or electoral candidate involved, if known; a concise
26 description of the act or omission complained of; and the government project,
27 program, document, vehicle, or activity involved, including its location, if applicable.

28 **Section 9. *Preliminary Evaluation, Referral, and Coordination.*** – Upon receipt
29 of a complaint, the CSC Regional or Field Office shall conduct a preliminary evaluation

solely to determine sufficiency in form and substance and the proper forum, and shall thereafter take the appropriate action, as follows:

(a) Where the respondent is an appointive public officer or employee within the jurisdiction of the CSC, the complaint shall be acted upon administratively in accordance with civil service laws and rules.

(b) Where the respondent is an elective public officer or where the acts complained of may give rise to criminal liability, the complaint shall be referred to the Office of the Ombudsman.

(c) Where the violation involves an electoral candidate or election-related conduct, the complaint shall be referred to the Commission on Elections (COMELEC).

The CSC shall coordinate with the Office of the Ombudsman, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), the Commission on Audit (COA), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and other relevant agencies to ensure the effective and uniform implementation of this Act. Nothing in this Act shall be construed as granting the CSC disciplinary or adjudicatory authority over elective public officers, which authority remains vested in the Office of the Ombudsman or other competent bodies under existing law.

Section 10. ***Penalties for Violations.*** –

(1) First Violation – Non-Election Related. – Any public officer or employee who commits a violation of this Act not related to an election period or the distribution of government assistance shall be punished by:

1. a fine of not less than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 500,000.00) but not more than Two Million Pesos (Php 2,000,000.00); and
2. mandatory removal of the prohibited signage, material, or branding at the offender's expense;

(2) Aggravated Violation. – A violation of this Act shall be considered aggravated and punishable by imprisonment of not less than six (6) months

1 but not more than two (2) years, and a fine of not less than Two Million Pesos
2 (Php 2,000,000.00) but not more than Five Million Pesos (Php 5,000,000.00),
3 when committed under any of the following circumstances:

- 4 1. The violation is election-related, committed during the election period
5 or within one (1) year immediately preceding an election;
- 6 2. The violation involves the distribution of government assistance,
7 benefits, or public services to identifiable beneficiaries; or
- 8 3. The violation involves repeated, systematic, or large-scale branding,
9 defined as the installation or display of prohibited identifiers in more
10 than one government project, program, document, vehicle, or
11 locality.

12 (3) Second or Subsequent Violation. – A second or subsequent violation of this
13 Act shall be punishable by the penalties provided under subsection (2) and
14 shall, upon final conviction or final administrative determination, result in
15 perpetual disqualification from holding public office; and

16
17 (4) Administrative Liability. – The penalties imposed under this Act shall be
18 without prejudice to administrative liability under existing civil service laws,
19 rules, and regulations, including dismissal from the service, forfeiture of
20 benefits, and disqualification from reemployment in government, as well as to
21 liability under other applicable penal laws.

22 Section 11. ***Prescription of Offenses.*** – All offenses punishable under this Act shall
23 prescribe in four (4) years, pursuant to Section 1 of Act No. 3326.

24 Section 12. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within sixty (60) days after
25 the effectivity of this Act, the Civil Service Commission (CSC), as the leading
26 implementing agency, shall promulgate the rules and regulations to effectively
27 implement the provisions of this Act, in coordination with the Department of Public
28 Works and Highways (DPWH), the Commission on Audit (COA), the Department of the
29 Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Metro Manila Development Authority
30 (MMDA), the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB), the National Historical
31 Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), and other relevant government agencies, and
32 upon consultation with relevant stakeholders.

1 The IRR shall include, among others:

- 2 1. Standards and specifications governing the prohibition on claiming credit
3 through signage, billboards, markers, and other forms of publicity in public
4 works projects, including government-owned or government funded facilities
5 and properties;
- 6 2. Guidelines on the prohibition on the use of names of public officials or other
7 persons associated with them in the naming of public works, government
8 projects, or facilities, consistent with existing laws and the rules of the NHCP;
- 9 3. Procedures for the receipt, evaluation, referral, and disposition of complaints
10 under this Act, consistent with the enforcement and complaints mechanism
11 established herein; and
- 12 4. Coordination protocols among the CSC, the Office of the Ombudsman, the
13 Commission on Elections (COMELEC), and other concerned agencies to ensure
14 effective enforcement within their respective mandates.

15 The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) shall, within the same period,
16 promulgate supplemental rules consistent with the IRR to govern matters within its
17 jurisdiction, particularly the prohibition against interference by electoral candidates in
18 the conduct and distribution of government programs under Section 4(e) of this Act.

19 Section 13. **Information, Education, and Public Awareness.** – the CSC, in
20 coordination with relevant government agencies and civil society organizations, shall
21 undertake a continuing and systematic campaign to educate all public officers on their
22 duties and obligations under this Act. Such campaign shall place particular emphasis
23 on the prohibitions provided under Section 4 of this Act and shall promulgate
24 adherence to the highest standards of integrity and accountability in the conduct of
25 government programs, projects, and activities. To ensure strict compliance with the
26 Anti-Epal Law, directives shall be regularly disseminated through official circulars,
27 memoranda, seminars, symposia, for a, and other appropriate means, thereby
28 reinforcing the responsibility of every public officer to uphold the provisions of this
29 Act.

30 The CSC, in the same coordination, shall likewise undertaking a continuing and
31 systematic campaign to fully inform the general public of the provisions of this Act.
32 This campaign shall be carried out through newspapers of general circulation, radio,

1 television, or other media forms, as well as through seminars, symposia, for a, or other
2 non-traditional means of dissemination. The public shall be regularly reminded of the
3 existence and functions of the Anti-Epal Desks, the nature of violations covered by
4 this Act, and the procedures available for filing complaints.

5 For purposes of effective implementation, the CSC shall ensure that information
6 materials are accessible in both traditional and digital formats, translated into major
7 local languages where necessary, and disseminated widely to promote transparency,
8 accountability, and citizen participation.

9 Section 14. ***Separability Clause.*** – If any part or provision of this Act is held invalid
10 or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected shall remain in full force and
11 effect.

12 Section 15. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, executive orders, issuances, decrees, rules
13 and regulations or any part thereof which are inconsistent with or contrary to the
14 provisions of this Act are deemed amended, modified, or repealed accordingly.

15 Section 16. ***Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
16 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

17 *Approved,*